

D. WHEN AND HOW BENEFITS ARE DELIVERED

Effective September 30, 2001

WAC 388-412-0020 When do I get my benefits?

- (1) You get your on-going cash benefits on the first of the month.
- (2) You get your on-going food assistance within the first ten days of the month. The day of the month that you get your benefits is the same as the last number of your food assistance AU number. If the last number of your AU number is zero, you get your benefits on the tenth.

Effective September 30, 2001

WAC 388-412-0025 How do I get my benefits?

- (1) Your cash benefits are sent to you by:
 - (a) Electronic benefit transfer (EBT);
 - (b) Direct deposit into you own bank account (electronic funds transfer-EFT); or
 - (c) Warrant if you have a payee who is not approved for direct deposit or you receive ADATSA, diversion, additional requirements or clothing and personal incidentals (CPI) payments.
- (2) You use a quest card to access your benefits in your EBT account. You get a personal identification number (PIN) that you must enter when using this card.
- (3) Your food assistance benefits are deposited into your EBT account.
- (4) We establish an EBT account for each AU that receives their benefits by EBT.
- (5) Your EBT account becomes inactive when you do not use it for ninety days. If you want to use the account after it becomes inactive, you must contact your local office and ask us to reactivate it.
- (6) Your cash and food assistance are canceled when you do not use your EBT benefits for three hundred sixty-five days. Your food assistance benefits cannot

be replaced.

- (7) We convert your food assistance to coupons when you move to a state where you cannot use your EBT account. There may be up to one dollar and ninety-nine cents left in your EBT account after conversion. You must use the remaining balance left in your EBT account within seven days after we convert your benefits from EBT to coupons. We cancel these benefits if you do not use them.
- (8) Cash benefits cannot be converted to warrants. You must use your cash benefits from your EBT account

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1. **Washington's Quest Card:**

- a. The client should pick-up the Quest card in the office unless there is a good reason the card and PIN must be mailed. There will be less likelihood for loss and the client can choose his or her own PIN if the client picks up the card.
- b. Clients can use Washington's Quest card in other states. However they may not be able to use it in some stores. Most stores that honor the card will display the Quest logo.

2. **When to cancel EBT benefits (Pending Voids):**

Benefits issued for the month can be voided from the date of issuance up until the day before the benefits are deposited into a client's account. The full issuance amount must be voided – you cannot void a partial amount. Benefits can be cancelled for the following reasons (based on ACES reason codes):

- a. **Cash Assistance:**
- Institutionalization
 - Head of Household is not eligible
 - Household request
 - Whereabouts unknown
 - Receives cash assistance in another state
 - Household member removed from the home and placed into foster care

b. Food Assistance:

- Death of **all** AU members
- Household request
- Receives food assistance in another state

3. **Cancelled (expunged) benefits:**

Benefits in an EBT account that have not been used for 365 days are cancelled. Cash and food assistance accounts are expunged individually. Therefore, activities in one account do not affect the other.

a. We expunge benefits when:

- i. The cash or food account has been inactive for 365 days or longer after the last debit transaction; or
- ii. There is a remaining balance in the food assistance EBT account after we converted food assistance benefits to coupons. These benefits are expunged if not spent within seven days after the conversion.

NOTE: If benefits are deposited into an EBT account just before the benefits are expunged, the new deposit will also be expunged along with the stale (inactive) benefits. If this happens, notify State Office staff and they will take the appropriate action to replace these benefits.

- b. The Finance Division holds expunged cash benefits for 2 years. If the payee does not claim these funds during this period, the funds are sent to the Department of Revenue to hold until the payee claims these benefits. However, expunged **food assistance** benefits are cancelled and cannot be claimed by the payee after the funds are expunged.
- c. Expunged food assistance benefits can be used to reduce a food assistance overpayment. Office of Financial Recovery reduces a client's outstanding overpayment balance when food assistance benefits are expunged.

4. Client can ask Post Office to hold mail:

Normally we require that mail we send must be returned if the post office knows that the client does not live at the residence. However, if a client requests the post office to hold their mail due to a temporary absence (i.e., vacation or hospital stay), the post office may hold mail that we send.

5. Types of allotments:

- a. An **initial allotment** is the first allotment issued to an assistance unit during a month.
- b. A **supplemental allotment** is any allotment after the initial allotment in a month including an issuance of benefits for a past period that a client was eligible to get (restoration of lost benefits). This does not include replacement of lost benefits.

6. Food coupons sent by certified mail:

EBT benefits that are converted to coupons are sent certified mail when the amount mailed is \$150 or more. This means that someone at the client's address must sign for them.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES**1. Inactive accounts:**

If you receive an ACES alert that a client's EBT account has been inactive for 60 days contact the client to determine why they have not used their benefits.

- a. Explain the process to them if they don't know how to use their EBT card to access their benefits;
- b. If they don't need the benefits, ask the client if there is other income or resources available to them.
- c. Explain that if they do not use their account for a period of 90 days the EBT account becomes inactive. Once the account is inactive, the client must contact their financial worker to have their account re-activated.

2. Direct deposit or Electronic Fund Transfers (EFT):

Clients may have their cash assistance deposited directly into a checking or savings account.

- a. The client completes the direct deposit enrollment form – Part 1 and their bank completes Part 2 of the form;
- b. When the completed form is returned to you, forward the form to the EBT Project Office at MS 45445 for entry into ACES (EFTR) screen: and
- c. Provide the client with the toll-free number to call if they have questions about EFT: 1-888-235-2954.

3. Alternate card holder:

A client who wants another person to do his or her grocery shopping, must authorize the person to be an alternate card holder.

- a. Explain to the client that an alternate card holder has access to all of the benefits in the client's EBT account;
- b. If the client wants to authorize another person to be an Alternate Card Holder, have the client complete and sign the EBT 002, Alternate Card Holder Authorization; and
- c. When the form is returned, authorize the issuance of a Quest card for the alternate cardholder.

NOTE: A Quest card for an alternate card holder, cannot be mailed. The person must come into the CSO to pick up the card. There isn't a mechanism in Citibank to mail it.

4. Post Office box:

Warrants for cash benefits can be mailed to a Post Office box or the CSO when a payee makes this request in writing. If a client requests that warrants be mailed:

- a. Verify the client's current living situation;
- b. Evaluate the client's reasons for wanting the warrant mailed;

- c. Notify the client of the decision;
- d. Make the necessary changes in ACES, if approved;
- e. Notify the appropriate staff of the address change;
- f. Document the action taken; and
- g. Create an alert to review the situation at least once every six months.

5. **Combined issuance:**

Authorize benefits at the same time for the month of application and the following month when a client applies on or after the 16th of the month.